

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02583 01 OF 02 281402Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 SP-02 INR-07 IO-13 EUR-12
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O 281310Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6439
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 LUSAKA 2583

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PDEV RH US UK
SUBJECT: RHODEIA PROPOSALS: TALKS WITH FRONTLINE

REF (A) LUSAKA 2572 (B) LUSAKA 2571

1. THE FRONTLINE LEADERS MET WITH OWEN AND YOUNG AT STATE HOUSE IN LUSAKA TODAY(AUGUST 27) REPRESENTING THE FRONT LINE WERE PRESIDENTS NYERERE, KAUNDA, MACHEL, ANGOLAN VICE PREMIER DOS SANTOS AND BOTSWANA VICE PRESIDENT MASIRE, EACH BACK BY FOREIGN MINISTERS AND OTHER ADVISORS. OWEN BEGAN THE TALKS WITH THE FRONTLINE LEADERS BY OUTLINING THE UK-US PROPOSALS IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL. DURING THE FIRST SESSION WHICH LASTED TWO AND ONE HALF HOURS OWEN AND YOUNG WERE ACCOMPANIED BY ADVISORS (MOOSE,MCHENRY GRAHAM, ETC. THEY MET ALONE WITH FRONTLINE LEADERS IN CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 LUSAKA 02583 01 OF 02 281402Z

A SECOND SESSION FOLLOWING LUNCH. (SEE REFTEL A FOR SUMMARY OR AFTERNOON DISCUSSIONS)

2. OWEN COMMENCED THE DISCUSSIONS BY OUTLINING UK-US PROPOSALS AS HE HAD DURING THE EARLIER MEETING WITH NKOMO AND MUGABE(REFTEL B) HE NOTED THAT THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THESE PROPOSALS IS THAT WHICH DEALS WITH THE

TRANSITION PERIOD. HE SAID THE GENEVA TALKS HAD GIVEN RISE TO CONSIDERABLE SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE IDEA OF AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. CONSEQUENTLY WE WERE NOW MAKING A MORE REALISTIC PROPOSITION WHICH WOULD INVOLVE REPLACEMENT OF THE SMITH GOVERNMENT BY A BRITISH-APPOINTED RESIDENT COMMISSIONER BACKED BY A UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE. HE WENT ON TO DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF A UN FORCE AND THE STATUS OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY AND THE LIBERATION FORCES DURING THE TRANSITION. HE SAID DETAILS OF THIS ASPECT OF THE TRANSITION WOULD BE LEFT TO BE WORKED OUT BY THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER, THE UN "SPOKESMAN" FOR THE LIBERATION FORCES AND SPOKESMEN FOR THE RHODESIAN ARMY.

3. OWEN STATED THAT THE OBJECTIVE WITH REGARD TO TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE VARIOUS FORCES WOULD BE TO GIVE THE ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT A MILITARY FORCE ON WHICH IT COULD RELY. HE THEN SAID HE BELIEVED THAT WE COULD SUCCEED ONLY THROUGH UN INVOLVEMENT. HE ADDED THAT HE ENVISAGED, IF ALL WENT REASONABLE WELL THE INSTALLATION OF A ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT BY THE SUMMER OF 1978.

4. AMBASSADOR YOUNG SAID THAT PRESIDENT NYERERE'S VISIT WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE TALKS PRESIDENT CARTER HAD WITH DR OWEN HAD ADDED TO OUR DETERMINATION TO HELP FIND AN INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE SOLUTION. PRESIDENT CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 02583 01 OF 02 281402Z

CARTER'S COMMITMENT TO USE THE POWER OF THE UNITED STATE TO SUPPORT PROGRESS TOWARD IMMEDIATE MAJORITY RULE REMAINS WITH SIMILAR SUPPORT FROM THE FRONTLINE STATES AND WITH UN INVOLVEMENT, WE BELIEVE IT IS POSSIBLE TO GO FORWARD.

5. RESPONDING FIRST FOR HIS COLLEAGUES SAID THAT THE SITUATION IN RHODESIA HAD BECAUSE OF THE LONG AND BLOODY STRUGGLE, REACHED A STATE "THAT I CANNOT SEE HOW YOU CAN BUILD ONE ARMY OUT OF TWO THAT HAVE OPPOSED EACH OTHER AS IN RHODESIA." THE FRONTLINE BELIEVES THAT THE "MOVING AWAY OF SMITH" MEANS THE "MOVING AWAY OF HIS ARMY". KAUNDA ASSERTED THAT OUR PROPOSAL REGARDING THE RHODESIAN ARMY WAS UNREALISTIC.

6. IN THE DISCUSSION THAT FOLLOWED, OWEN MAINTAINED THAT INASMUCH AS NEITHER SIDE WAS READY TO SURRENDER A COMPROMISE HAD TO BE REACHED. IF WE ACCEPTED THAT THE TWO FORCES COULD NOT COME TOGETHER IN ANY WAY, WE COULD NOT HAVE A SETTLEMENT. HE SAID THAT ONLY SOME ELEMENTS OF THE RHODESIAN ARMY WOULD REMAIN AND THAT THESE WOULD BE NEUTRALIZED BY THE PRESENCE OF A UN FORCE.

7. NYERERE REITERATED THAT "THE ISSUE OF THE ARMED FORCES IS "THE ISSUE". THE OBJECTIVE WAS TO GET RID OF SMITH.

TO ACHIEVE THIS THE FRONTLINE WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT THAT
THE NEW GOVERNMENT WOULD INHERIT THE POLICE THE CIVIL
SERVICE AND THE ESSENTIAL STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENT ECONOMY.
THEY COULD NOT HOWEVER ACCEPT THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF
THE RHODESIAN ARMY.

8. THE CONVERSATION CONTINUED IN THIS VEIN WITH OWN
ON THE ONE SIDE AND NYERERE AND MACHEL ON THE OTHER
TALKING PAST EACH OTHER. IN TIME OWEN DID SAY WHAT NYERERE
AND THE OTHERS WANTED TO HEAR " THAT THE NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL
ARMY (ZNA) WOULD BE BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCES. HOW
EVER BECAUSE THIS WAS PROCEEDED AND FOLLOWED BY EXPLANATORY
MATERIAL ON OWEN'S PART HIS INTERLOCUTORS APPARENTLY DID
NOT PICK UP THE POINT.
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PAGE 04 LUSAKA 02583 01 OF 02 281402Z

9. OWEN'S FAILURE TO BE EXPLICIT APPEARED TO ADD TO THE
MISUNDERSTANDING AND EVEN TO REINFORCE THE SUSPICION OF THE

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 02583 02 OF 02 281409Z
ACTION AF-10

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CONFIDENTIAL SECTION 2 OF 2 LUSAKA 2583

FRONTLINE THAT OUR MAIN CONSIDERATION WAS TO REASSURE THE RHODESIAN WHITES. AT ONE POINT, MACHEL SAID, "YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT WHITES; YOU SHOULD ALSO WORRY ABOUT BLACKS."

10. MACHEL SAID HE SAW NO REASON TO "SAVE THE FACE" OF SMITH'S ARMY; IT WAS AN ILLEGAL, REBEL ARMY. HOWEVER, HE ADMITTED COMPROMISE WAS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE SMITH ARMY HAD NOT BEEN DEFEATED. HIS PRIMARY CONCERN WAS THAT CONFIDENCE OF BOTH BLACKS AND WHITES HAD TO BE ASSURED. THIS COULD BE BROUGHT ABOUT ONLY BY A "NEUTRAL FORCE." HE DECLARED THAT THE FRONTLINE WANTED DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS AND THAT ELECTIONS COULD NOT BE GUARANTEED BY EITHER THE "SMITH FORCES" OR THE PATRIOTIC FRONT ARMY.

11. OWNE SAID HE FOUND HIMSELF IN COMPLETE AGREEMENT WITH THE OBJECTIVES MACHEL HAD MENTIONED. THE DIFFICULTY LAY IN DECIDING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 LUSAKA 02583 02 OF 02 281409Z

WHICH FORCES SHOULD GO INTO THE NEW ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY AND THAT THE DECISIONS COULD ONLY COME AS A RESULT OF TALKS BETWEEN THE RESIDENT COMMISSIONER DESIGNATE, THE UN REPRESENTATIVE AND THE COMMANDERS OF THE PRESENT RHODESIAN AND LIBERATION FORCES. IN ANY EVENT, THE NEW FORCE MUST REFLECT THE DECISION OF THE ELECTORATE AND BE LOYAL TO THE NEWLY ELECTED PRESIDENT. HERE AGAIN HE PROBABLY WAS BEING TOO ELLIPTICAL, INSTEAD OF FLATLY AGREEING THAT THE NEW ARMY HAD TO BE BASED ON THE LIBERATION FORCES. DOS SANTOS PICKED UP ON THIS POINT BY SAYING THAT AMBASSADOR YOUNG HAD TALKED ABOUT A NEW ZIMBABWE ARMY BEING "BASED MAINLY ON THE LIBERATION FORCES." HE STATED THAT "THIS WAS NOT CLEARLY DEFINED BY S. J. OWEN."

12. OWEN RESPONDED TO SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS ON DETAILS OF THE FORMATION OF THE ZIMBABWEAN NATIONAL ARMY BY REFERRING TO THE PROPOSED NEGOTIATIONS OVER MILITARY ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD. MACHEL AND NYERERE QUESTIONED THE BASIS OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY ASKED IF SMITH'S GENERALS COULD BE EXPECTED TO DISCUSS AND REACH AGREEMENT ON THEIR OWN DISAPPEARANCE. OWEN COUNTERED BY NOTING THAT THEY WOULD NOT TOTALLY DISAPPEAR. HE SAID THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITH SMITH IF THE ZIMBABWE ARMY WAS TO BE TOTALLY COMPOSED OF LIBERATION FORCES.

13. KAUNDA EXPRESSED HIS GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE MEETING AND SAID HE WAS NOW GOING BACK TO HIS OLD VIEW THAT THE WEST HAD NOT YET DECIDED TO DO AWAY WITH RACISM IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE COULD CONCLUDE NOTHING ELSE FROM THE BRITISH SUGGESTION OF A COMPROMISE WHICH ALLOWED SMITH'S ARMY TO STAY. THE WEST HAD THE POWER
TO FORCE A CHANGE BUT IT WAS REFUSING TO DO SO. HE HAD AGREED TO

CALL THE METING ON THE BAIS OF NYERERE'S ASSURANCE THAT THE UK AND US
HAD AGREED THAT THE SMITH ARMY MUST GO, BUT NOW HE PAINFULLY REALIZED
THAT THIS WAS NOT TRUE.
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PAGE 03 LUSAKA 02583 02 OF 02 281409Z

14. THE REMAINING 45 MINUTS PRODUCED MORE OF THE SAME. AS THE
SESSION WAS ABOUT TO BREAK FOR LUNCH AT 2:30, MACHEL PRETTY MUCH
SUMMED UP THE FRONTLINE'S MISUNDERSTANDING OF WHAT OWEN WAS TRYING
TO CONVEY. HE SAID: "I UNDERSTAND THAT THE BRITISH TRUST THE SMITH
ARMY; WE TRUST THE LIBERATION FORCES. THUS WE HAVE A BASIC DIFFERENCE
.
THEY AGREE TO GET RID OF SMITH, BUT WANT TO REAIN THE SMITH ARMY."

15. AFTER LUNCH, OWEN AND YOUNG MET ALONG WITH NYERERE, KAUNDA,
MASIRE, DOS SANTOS AND CHISSANO (MACHEL HAD DEPARTED FOR MAPUTO).
THE TALKS THEN TOOK A DIFFERENT TRUN, AND ENDED ON THE NOTE
THAT THE UK AND US AND FRONTLINE WERE IN BASIC ACCORD ON THE BASIS
OF NYERERE'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AND THAT WE SHOULD PROCEED
WITH OUR INITIATIVE (REFTEL A)
LOW

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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